September 28, 1843

We have been on the trail for ten weeks and we had come to a great decision on where to go. We have reached the fork in the trail were we could go to the Cimarron Cutoff or the Mountain Branch. I would like to get there faster and take the Cimarron Cutoff, but many of the others were traveling with children and found it not safe to take the Cutoff. The whole time on the trail we haven’t gotten lucky with the rivers and streams we have had to cross. The others are starting to hear about that and the Indians around the Cimarron Cutoff. When we were around Pawnee Rock we were ambushed by a bunch of Pawnee Indians. They took many goods from us and took the life of Elizabeth Stone. Everyone was getting scared of the Cimarron cutoff and I was mad, I wanted to get there and see my wife but the others are too scared. Tonight I will ask the other men if they want to leave the group and take the Cimarron Cutoff.

It was about 6:00 P.M. and everyone in the group was starting to go to sleep, I went right up to four men that were traveling alone and asked them if they would rather take the other trail, but they all said no, except one. This man’s name was Stephen John, the blacksmith. He was going to start a new business and he had to be there in ten days. I told him, “We would be lucky if we got there in ten weeks, let alone ten days.” We were to take both of our wagons that night, but we needed more food. I had an idea; I said that we should steal it from the others. Stephen thought it was a great idea. We went up to our first wagon, poked our heads in the tent to see if they were sleeping, and they were. We went right up and took half their food and half the water. We did the same with two other wagons. It seemed everything was going better than planned.

It was time for us to go; it was about 11:00 P.M. We set off for our new homes. We had a long and hard journey ahead of us. Wish me, Mr. Robert Thompson, and my new friend, Mr. Stephen John, the best of luck.

October 17, 1843

We were on the most dangerous part of the Cimarron Cutoff, and I was very confident that we were going to be fine. Was I wrong or what? We got to the first river and we unassembled our wagons so we could cross the river. We had done all that and when we went off to find some lunch Stephen’s wheels to his wagon had been stolen. We were not sure what to do, so we moved all of Steve’s things into my wagon. We had to leave a lot behind though. Steve had a lot of things for his new store. We were crossing the river a lot of my things fell out, including all of the water. Even more water got in and ruined a lot of Steve’s things. Things now were not going at all as planned and we were now at the narrow part of the path. This is the worst part of the trip. We had come to the narrow path that is suspended over a small canyon. Steve was driving the wagon and I heard a crack. The wagon’s axle broke and the wagon was falling over to the edge. Steve tried to jump out but his feet got caught when he jumped and he fell back into the wagon.

The wagon, my friend, and a chance to see my family was all gone. I had to walk all the way to San Miguel and I was only at McNees Crossing. I could only hope for another wagon, but for now I have to walk.

By: Robert T.